

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

THOMAS LINDNER

Circuit Construction Sergeant, Army National Guard, Cold War

2018

**OH
2128**

**OH
2128**

Lindner, Thomas (b. 1938). Oral History Interview, 2018.

Approximate length: 1 hour 5 minutes

Contact WVM Research Center for access to original recording.

Abstract:

In this oral history interview, Thomas Lindner, a Waukesha (Wisconsin) native recounts his service as a Circuit Construction Sergeant with the 132nd Signal Battalion of the National Guard from May 1955 through October 1962, including an activation of his unit during the Berlin Crisis in 1961. Lindner grew up on a farm in Waukesha County and joined the National Guard when he was seventeen. He discusses his motivation to serve in the National Guard and his family's history of military service including a cousin who was a prisoner of war during the Korean War. Lindner joined the National Guard in May 1955 and attended basic training at Camp McCoy. After training, Lindner describes working multiple civilian jobs including a heavy machine operator and a delivery truck driver for Elias Grinding. Lindner discusses when the 32nd Infantry Division was called to active duty, his reaction to being activated, and riding out to Fort Lewis (Washington) by train. Lindner's unit went to the Mojave Desert for a six-week-long training exercise. He mentions his unit thinking that they might go to Germany as the Berlin Wall was being built, getting their information from the news, and not trusting rumors. Leaky the Lion was the unit mascot while they were in Washington and Lindner recounts a few anecdotes about Leaky being playful and finding him a home when the unit returned to Wisconsin. At the time of the interview, Lindner was active in his church and he discusses going down to New Orleans with a church group after Hurricane Katrina.

Biographical Sketch:

Lindner (b. 1938) served as a Circuit Construction Sergeant with the 132nd Signal Battalion of the National Guard from 1955 to 1962. His unit was activated in 1961 during the Berlin Crisis and was sent to Fort Lewis (Washington).

Archivists' Note:

Transcriptions are a reflection of the original oral history recording. Due to human and machine fallibility transcripts often contain small errors. Transcripts may not have been transcribed from the original recording medium. It is strongly suggested that researchers engage with the oral history recording as well as the transcript.

Interviewed by Ellen Brooks, 2015.

Transcribed by Audio Transcription Center, 2017.

Reviewed and Abstract by Rachelle Halaska, 2018.

Interview Transcript:

[Beginning of OH2128.Lindner]

- Brooks: Today is Thursday, May 10, 2018. This is an interview with Thomas Lindner, who served with the National Guard from May of 1955 through October of 1962. This interview is being conducted at Mr. Lindner's home in Pewaukee, Wisconsin. The interviewer is Ellen Brooks, and this interview is being recorded for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Oral History Program. All right. Well, we'll just start really quick with where and when you were born.
- Lindner: I was born, in Waukesha, Wisconsin, actually in a house. They'll have to—made a house call back then. And it was August 26, 1938.
- Brooks: And can you tell me just a little bit about your family? What did your parents do?
- Lindner: We were farmers basically, but at the time I was born, he wasn't on a farm. But then shortly after that, he worked as a hired hand for my uncle on a farm on Burleigh Road where Briggs & Stratton used to be in, so. That's kind of where I was raised for—until about 1941 then we moved to—he worked a farm on shares out on Broadway just east of Waukesha. And that's where I lived until 1947 then he moved to—rented a farm in Brookfield.
- Brooks: Do you have siblings?
- Lindner: I have two brothers. I have one brother older and one brother younger, which are both deceased, so.
- Brooks: And can you tell me a little bit, about what you were like as a kid?
- Lindner: Well, I was just a perfect child. I never got into trouble. [Both laugh]
- Brooks: Yes.
- Lindner: No, I guess we're typical. I had two brothers, and we were typical boys. And being on a farm, we always had a lot of friends over to play baseball or whatever. And we also had horses, so we used to ride in the horse shows and that type of thing growing up. So, I guess, it was—back then, it was pretty nice. [Both laugh] We enjoyed it. But when my one brother—my older brother got killed in a car accident when he was seventeen, so I was with him and I was fifteen at the time. My other brother is two years younger. He also served in the National Guard with me, so. We were out there together, so that was nice.
- Brooks: So, tell me how you ended up in the National Guard?

Lindner: You know, I really don't know. I always had a desire to serve in the Army of some type, and I didn't like the draft program because I wanted to know where I was going. So, I was still in high school when I joined the National Guard, so then I was secure. I knew if we did get called up, we'd get called up as a unit, so you'd go in with a bunch of your friends. So, that's the reason I got in the Guards, and I don't know why was—I chose that time, but I did, and I was glad I did. My only regret is that when we came back—I should have—I had enough Army for now, but I should have held off for a couple of months and stayed in, but I didn't. So, I bailed out, and I regretted it later.

Brooks: So, you went in in 1955, so you would have been seventeen—

Lindner: Right.

Brooks: —at the time? Okay. And can you tell me a little bit about that—the process of enlisting?

Lindner: Well, I just went down to the armory—there's one right in Waukesha—and talked to the master sergeant who was in charge. I can't remember his name. He is a heck of a nice guy. But then I signed the papers and I was in.

Brooks: [Laughs] Did you have to go through any tests, any, like, physicals or anything?

Lindner: Oh, yeah. We had to go. It's Doctor Smeral [sp??] I think. It was a local doctor. We had to pass a physical. Yeah.

Brooks: And did you—do you think being alive during World War II had anything to do with your want to serve?

Lindner: Possibly, because I had uncles that served. My dad did not because he was farming and he had enough kids. I guess he was deferred. I guess farmer—all farmers were pretty much deferred. But I had several uncles that were, and they all survived, and so it's—it was nice. I had an uncle that was—our cousin actually was in the Korean War. He was captured in one of the first major battles and spent the whole war in a POW camp. So that was neat—well, not a neat experience but different. We're so glad to see him come home when they ended the—or I guess they never really ended it, but they called a ceasefire, and he came back. He weighed ninety-one pounds. Oh yeah, he was—and he was, like, 180, 200 pounds. He was a big guy. Yeah.

Brooks: What did your parents think about you joining, you enlisting?

Lindner: They had to sign for me, so I didn't have to do a lot of talking to convince them. They were all for it though. Then my brother joined when he got out of high school. He was eighteen I think.

Brooks: What was his name?

Lindner: Bill, so—

Brooks: And so, the National Guard is a little bit different because—or at least as so—as far as I know, you enlist then do you go—immediately go to basic training?

[00:05:06]

Lindner: You know, you—I didn't have to. I did my basic training at Fort McCoy or Camp McCoy back then. But my brother when he joined, they changed that, and he went out to Missouri, Fort Leonard Wood. And then he went—he spent six months in active duty, and he went to Camp—boy, I can't remember, some place in California first. He had advanced infantry training, so.

Brooks: And what about you? So, you went to Camp McCoy?

Lindner: Mm-hm. And that was just a two-week period, and the rest of it took place in the Company area. And it wasn't like what they had to go through, but I don't know why they did it that way, but they did.

Brooks: Can you just tell me a little bit about that, about basic training? It's two weeks and—

Lindner: Mm-hm.

Brooks: —was it really physical, intense?

Lindner: I didn't think so, but it was the same. More marksmanship in—well, you did—I don't know what you call it, but they—I can't think of it. Where you crawl through barbed wire and all that kind of stuff and—but I was pretty good physically, in shape, and I didn't have no problem with it. I thought it was kind of fun really, so [laugh] it—but then when we went out to Fort Lewis, we went through the whole thing again, so. But even then, I was still in decent shape. And the gas chamber and all that kind of stuff, we went through, but I didn't think it was a big deal but—

Brooks: What else did you learn at basic?

Lindner: Basically, how to walk and how to shoot. [Both laugh] But I knew that before I went in, so—

Brooks: Uh-huh. Was there anything that surprised you—

Lindner: No.

Brooks: —in training?

Lindner: Because I had now talked to enough people. I knew what was coming up and yeah. So, I—there really were no surprises. I—later on after I was in the service, for a number of years, they were looking for people to attend the Wisconsin Military Academy, and I signed up for that. And that was more rigorous than the basic training was. They put you through quite a bit, but I still—I was in that when we were called up, and they'd cancel the camp. And then all those who were in, they sent them back to their home units, and then they said, "Come back after we're done with this." Well, I never did go back, but—I guess I should have, but I didn't.

Brooks: And what was the point of that Academy—the—?

Lindner: Well, if you pass it, you would graduate as an officer. That was the intent of it.

Brooks: Mm-hm. So, tell me how it works in terms of being assigned to a unit.

Lindner: Well, I don't know how they'd establish it [??]. We—when I first joined the unit in Waukesha, it was the headquarters company for the 127th Infantry Division. But then after about three years, the Army changed that three regiment into five battle groups, so then we became signal company with—our job was to supply communication. The battle group would be here, and we'd be here, and then headquarters would be here, and we were the link in between. I think that was the first—of cell towers came out of that because they would transmit telephone conversations through—a company would be at the battle groups and then we'd be the link in between, and so they could communicate with the headquarters. Otherwise, it was all radio, but here, it was telephone. They could pick up a telephone, talk to the general, or whoever's in charge back at the headquarters, so. And I think that's—cell towers came out of that or whatever—it was the beginnings of it anyway. It was kind of cool. It was really neat to see.

Brooks: So eventually, did you get your own position, your own assignment?

Lindner: Well, I was, what they called, a —circuit construction sergeant, and I was in charge of the switchboard. So, everybody laid wires into my board, even what they called radio terminal carriers. They'd lay a twenty-four pair cable into our switchboard and then artillery—you always lay down—we wouldn't lay to A Company, A Company would lay it to us. So, then we laid to headquarters. So, that we had—that was a different part of our platoon that would lay the wires. I just, basically, worked with the switchboard and that—made sure everything was hooked all right and functioned right, and so.

[00:10:01]

Brooks: And did you go through advanced training for that?

Lindner: Yeah. We trained all the time for that. We'd learn how to operate different equipment, and all we—you know, every week. Because we had month—weekly meetings and then every—I think it was once a month, we had a weekend if I remember right. So, that was always learning, studying for—learning for your job.

Brooks: So, you did—[telephone rings]

Lindner: Well, I think that—you got that hon?

Brooks: I can pause this.

Lindner: Yeah, she's got it. She has a beauty shop here, so—

Brooks: I thought I saw that. And did we pause? I think we're still going. We are still going.

Lindner: Okay.

Brooks: That's fine. I can—

Lindner: Right.

Brooks: So, you did your basic for two weeks and then do you—tell me a little bit, about just how you lived your life while you were in between trainings and things like that.

Lindner: Oh, well, let's see. I started working for a—actually, I mean, I operated heavy equipment not at first, but that's how I started with a guy who installed septic beds and did basements. And so, I worked with him. Just labored until I—and in—during lunch hour and everything, I went to run the machine, so. But raised in a farm, I was used to running tractors and what have you. And when we were eating lunch, instead of eating lunch, I'd jump in the machine and try to operate it, you know? So, eventually, I became better than he was, so pretty soon, I had the job, you know? Then he hired other people, and they worked under me, and we would do the job, and he would just supervise. [Laughs] So, it was good for me.

And then, let's see, when we called up—oh, in 1959, everything fell apart. The economy went to heck, and so he didn't have no work for me. And we didn't have any unemployment insurance or nothing like that. So, I went to work for an outfit called Elias Grinding, and I went there to actually drive the delivery truck to deliver knives. They delivered all over—well, mostly Milwaukee, but they go out to others, probably as far west as Janesville and that's about it. They sharpen paper knives. I mean big paper knives like these big machines where they—some of them were ten-foot long. So, they were quite big into that. That's all they did,

basically, and then they do some job work that a grinding shop would do. But mostly, it was sharpening paper knives and then I delivered them.

Well, in between if they did—like I'd start at—usually, I started at noon because they—when I first started and then I'd go out at noon. But then I knew what they were doing because in high school, I had learned how to run the machines. They were smaller, but they were still the same. So, he put me to work then they used to—had me come in at—in the morning. So, I'd run the machine, the grinding machine until noon, and I delivered my knives. Well pretty soon, he didn't want me driving a truck. He wanted me to run the grinder. So, I did that for—well, until we were called up. I was—basically, they wanted to do it until the economy picked up, and we got more work.

Well, then when we got called up, and I went out, for a year, I was gone. We came back. I did it for—I think, like, we got back in October, and I did it until spring. And then I actually went into business with myself with the other guy, so then I quit that and then went in my own business. So, I did that for, I don't know, three, four years and then he got sick and we couldn't—it was hard to function, so. I—we had—I think we had ten guys working for us at the time and then I found all them guys jobs and then I pulled the pin and went to work for—well, I used to—I tried selling life insurance, but I couldn't—I didn't see that as a real way to go. So then, I went back and I stopped at what was one of my competitors at the time. That was in 1964 I think, and '65—well in '67. Anyhow, I went to work for him until I retired, so that was pretty much it.

Brooks: Wow. And how did your, like, National Guard life have an impact on the rest of your life until you got called up?

Lindner: Oh, it really wasn't that hard. I mean Monday nights was guard night and then the weekend, well I worked a lot of weekends. But I just tell them I can't and then there was no problem, so. And we just worked it all in. And like I say, I regret—when we got back, they said we had fulfilled our military obligation, “You can get out if you want.” And well, we wanted to have kids, and all that kind of stuff, and start a family, and so I just said, “That's enough of this. Pull the pin.”

[00:15:21]

Brooks: Why do you regret it?

Lindner: Because I liked it. You know, I really did enjoy the service and the camaraderie with the guys, and it was okay. I liked it. Yeah.

Brooks: So, can you tell me a little bit, about what was happening? Like your understanding of, kind of, the climate before you got called up? Like was there—did you think that were you going to get called up? Were you paying attention to things that were happening overseas?

Lindner: Yeah. Oh, yeah. We always paid attention. Now, I didn't—there was no concern at all until the—well, I guess Kennedy got elected, and Russia was making waves, and I guess they called it “saber rattling.” I don't know. But you could see things were not going that great. So, it didn't come as a real big surprise that he—why he picked the 32nd. He could—there's lots he could have called up, but he did pick 32nd as one of them. He called up another unit, I think, from North Carolina if I remember right and—but it—that's the way it was. And we didn't have no—what would you say—animosity, or it wasn't mad that he [inaudible]. I—if we had to serve, that's what we're there for, and so we're ready to go.

Brooks: And this is October of '61?

Lindner: Sixty—

Brooks: No?

Lindner: —or '61. We—

Brooks: Yeah?

Lindner: Yeah, October of '61—

Brooks: Because you—mm-hm.

Lindner: —right.

Brooks: So, can you tell me how you got the news that you were being called up?

Lindner: I think our company commander told us that there was a very good chance, and I think I heard it on the news there where I heard it. But we, kind of, knew what was coming. It was no real surprise.

Brooks: And what was your reaction?

Lindner: Well, we just bought a house, so it—I guess the reaction was that, “How are we going to pay for it,” and all this and that. But we figured, the Lord will take care of us one way or the other. We'll—and my wife was working as a beautician, so we figured we'll make it work one way or the other.

Brooks: And what's your wife's name?

Lindner: Sharon.

Brooks: And when did you get married?

Lindner: '59, October 17, 1959.

Brooks: Okay.

Lindner: Boy, if I forget that, there'd be trouble. [Both laugh]

Brooks: And did she have any thoughts or opinions about you being in the service?

Lindner: I think—well, I was in the service when we got married, so, I guess, it was just part of the package, so yeah. I don't know. I thought she'd come down here, but she—she's shy.

Brooks: That's okay. [Laughs] So, tell me about getting called up. And so, you got the news that you're being called up, did things start moving really quickly and—?

Lindner: Pretty quick. Once we got the news, I would say—oh, I don't think it was more than two weeks. And I told my employer that I had to quit and that I was going to that. And then we—we had to show up at the armory every day then they were fully activated at that point. I can't remember when the heck—what date we went out to Fort Lewis. So then, we were in the Army then that was it. But, yeah, we had to pack up all our equipment. We loaded all up on railroad cars, and they sent these—what do you call them—to our—ah. These dumpsters like you see on the trains going by, we loaded all our equipment. Everything that we had went in them, and then they put them on trains and shipped them out there. And then the sad part of it was we were one of the last units to leave, so the railroad ran out of troop cars, so they had to send us out in first-class cars so that was disappointing [both laugh] not really. But then—

Brooks: I see—

Lindner: —all the local breweries got together, and I don't know. We had almost a boxcar full of beer they gave us then we had—I had my own compartment on it. It was first class. We had our porter and everything, and we filled one compartment with beer, and they doled that out on the way out there. And there was a lot of card playing, and they did—made sure nobody got too much to drink on the way out there, so.

[00:20:01]

And we convinced the—they wouldn't let—normally let people out on the rear platform that you could stand as you went through the mountains in that, but we convinced our conductor to do that, and he did. He let us off, and we could stand out there. That was really cool going through the mountain.

But then we—when we left here, on the way out, I wrote a letter to my wife and then we stopped—I think, it was in Omaha—to change the crew, train crews. So, I

asked one conductor if he'd mind mailing the letter for me, which he did. So, she got the letter before we even got out there. That was kind of cool.

Brooks: How long was that trip?

Lindner: Two nights we spent on the train and three days, so.

Brooks: It sounds like a lot of fun.

Lindner: It was. The trip out there was really great. Well, in first-class car, you had your own compartment, and you had all the beer you wanted to drink, so how can you go wrong with that? And if they served us in a—I mean, you had no choice what to eat, but it was in the regular dining car, which was cool. It was a nice experience. I always wanted to go back and ride the railroad. We were never—never did it, but it was fun.

Brooks: So, tell me about getting to Fort Lewis.

Lindner: That was a little—we arrived at night. It was pitch-dark. I couldn't see a thing, and they just had, you know, two-and-a-half-ton trucks. And we'd climb in one of them, and fortunately, the guy knew where we were going. He took us to our barracks, and we got in our barracks and there—we had nothing in our barracks. There were bunks but no mattresses or nothing. So, the first night, we just slept where you could sleep, you know? Then the next day, they brought mattresses, but there's no bedding and there was no equipment. So, there was a lot of unhappy campers for—I don't think we got our equipment for like a week, that we just sat around the barracks and, well, they'd march us, but then a lot of it was raining, and so they—we spent a lot of time sitting in the barracks playing cards. And then there—this one Lieutenant Forkstrom [sp??] I think his name was. There's a lot of water run at these—under the barracks. These barracks had not been used since World War II. So, he asked for volunteers to do some shoveling to drain the water from the barracks. So, we were sitting there, and my brother was there, too, and I said, "Come on, let's go. We aren't doing nothing anyway. We'll—" I mean we're used to shoveling—we had no problem with that—then a couple of other guys went. There was about five, six of us that for, I don't know, the best part of the afternoon, we shoveled drainage ditches around the barracks. But lo and behold, we'd come to find out, we got excused from many standby inspections because we did this. The lieutenant must have talked to the company commander so then for the next—I don't know how long. It was quite a while. That on Saturday morning, you had—always had standby inspection, and you couldn't leave until everything passed. Well, we were on our way to town, we had—or the day even or wherever, you know? So, that was cool.

Brooks: Yeah. I've heard that you're not supposed to volunteer for things.

Lindner: That's what they say, yeah.

Brooks: Yeah. But sometimes, it works out?

Lindner: Oh yeah. And I also volunteered to clean all the machine guns because we had a .30 and a .50-caliber machine gun for each platoon, so there was like five, ten machines then to clean. But instead of standby inspection, I went to the supply depot, and we sat down and had coffee. And usually, the supply sergeant had donuts, and we're sitting around cleaning the machine guns, so no big deal. [Both laugh] I enjoy that kind of stuff anyway, so yeah. So, I got out of a lot of Mickey Mouse stuff, you know?

Brooks: Can you tell me about just kind of daily life while you were at Fort Lewis?

Lindner: The—once we were settled in on the post, it was like a nine-to-five job. You just—at first, my wife didn't come out. She didn't come out until Thanksgiving. But you just did your job and then afterwards, you sit around the barracks, or go to the dayroom, or walk down to the—ah, what do you call them—the canteen or—?

Brooks: Mess hall?

Lindner: Well, you weren't really allowed in the mess hall unless you were to eat and—but I was on post for the C—oh, not the ... Oh gosh, good memory, but you—they had a bar there, and there were games to play, and stuff like that. We had a nice dayroom. We had a ping-pong table. And a lot of guys would go in there, and we'd go, and you could watch a little TV. But most of the time, we spent more time on the field than anything else. We were gone most of the time, so. And [laughs] I don't know if I was—but I wrangled the job, too, when we were—every piece of equipment that the Army owns has a preventive maintenance form. Well, you have to fill them out every time you pull PM, preventative maintenance. I don't care if it's on a screwdriver, you fill out a form, you know? So, I was somewhat familiar with the form being that—well, I did that, what their—the number of it was. And we were missing a lot of forms, and I asked the supply sergeant. I said, "Hey, where are these forms," and he says, "Well, I don't know. I guess maybe headquarter come. They would have them." I said, so, "Well, I'll go over and check." "Okay."

So, well from then on, I had my own jeep and my own—and actually, it was—there's always a missing a form, right? So every day, I'd have to make a trip to the division headquarters or some place to try to find a form. Well then, of course, I mean you had to stop at the donut shop. And the laundry was always a good place to stop because usually everybody is missing handkerchiefs or something like that. They never turned up back up in your laundry, so I'd always grab a big handful of them and take them back to the guys and stuff like that, you know? It was—I had it made when we were in the company area, so I—

Brooks: And you said you—so when you said you spend a lot of time in the field, what exactly does that mean?

Lindner: Well, so-called training then we'd go out and set up our equipment and make sure it operates, and so.

Brooks: And was that—did you have another job besides that? Did you—like you said, you know, like a nine-to-five type situation? What were you—or was it different every day?

Lindner: On post you mean or—?

Brooks: Mm-hm.

Lindner: No, I did pretty much the same thing every day. It was cleaning equipment, make sure it's running. And then, of course, you know, it was—I think there were nine guys in my squad, so I was ahead of them. I mean, yeah, they all were good guys and wanted to make sure everything worked, so they were busy. But I mean it wasn't busy, busy like in civilian life, but as long as you look like you're doing something. [Laughs] The main thing was to get it done. That was it. I don't care. So when we're—when we get the notice that we're going to move out this Saturday or whatever the day was, that it's ready. You know, that was my only prerogative that I put on the guys. I said, "Hey, you depend on it as much as I do, so make sure it's working." So that's what we did, and if we needed a part, well then, I would usually try to get it.

But we had—our platoon was the only platoon in all the time we were out there that never was out of operation for whatever reason. Every other—there are five platoons and the other four, for whatever reason, either they were captured or they were equipment failure or whatever, but we never were—I mean not that we—they're always trying—the enemy is always trying to knock out communication, so. But we always were successful in fighting them back or whatever, so yeah. So, we got our recommendation for that.

Brooks: And as you—you stayed at Fort Lewis during this—

Lindner: Mm-hm.

Brooks: —time? Okay.

Lindner: Well, other than when we want down the Mojave Desert. And we're down there for—it's quite a long time. I like to say six weeks, but I'm not positive how long it really was, but that was another fun operation too.

Brooks: Before we get on to that, you said some of the other platoons were captured? Is that like a—? How were they captured?

Lindner: Well, they're—you know, when you go out in a field, it's set up. It's supposed to be a combat situation.

Brooks: Okay. Got it.

Lindner: And they have a regular aggressor army that that's all they do is go and try to attack other—

Brooks: Okay.

Lindner: Yeah, so. They—I don't remember how to—they never tell you exactly, but they were put out of commission, so. Then they'd have to try to route their wires through us and—but—or whoever is closer. Not all of them were routed at one time.

Brooks: Sure. Okay. So, you went to the Mojave Desert, and you said maybe six weeks-ish?

Lindner: Yeah.

Brooks: What was that like?

Lindner: [Laughs] The trip down there was interesting. We flew down, and it was a troop transport, you know? So, it was an Army or Air Force pilot come walking through the plane and we asked him how long it's going to take to fly down. He says, "I don't know. We never made it yet," so. [Laughs] He was quite a jokester then he'd come on the intercom and he says, "Don't worry about a thing, guys. I've got the manual right here with me." [Laughs] Then he says as we're going down the runway, "Okay, on the count of three, everybody inhale." [Laughs] Oh, yeah. And then another he was—he was says, "Fasten your seatbelts. I'm going to see if I can get this big MF off the ground," as he's starting to roar up the engine or rev the engine up. So that was—it was kind of interesting. Then we get down there and there's no way to get off the plane. There are no gangplank or nothing to get off. So, we had to slide down a rope from the center of the plane to come down. That was interesting. I guess that's where they got you in shape.

[00:30:16]

Brooks: Yeah.

Lindner: So then, we went—a cattle truck us out into a staging area where our trucks were going to meet us there, which was fine. We all get off the truck, and all we got is our barracks bag, you know, duffel bag. And I said, "Sergeant, where is the truck?" "Oh, they'll be here." Well, we waited two days before the trucks get

here. Yeah. What we got is what we took with us. Some guys had candy bars, and that kind of stuff, and a canteen of water. But eventually, they did show up.

Brooks: Where did you sleep during those two days?

Lindner: Just right there in our duffel bag or whatever was handy.

Brooks: Oh. So, when the trucks finally showed up, where did they take you?

Lindner: I really don't know. Like out in the desert, and we just followed them, and we went and followed our company commander and yeah. I have no clue where we were at really. We landed at a huge airbase. We flew over the Golden Gate getting there, and that was kind of cool. Then we landed at Georgia Airfield Base [Georgia Airforce Base], and it was a fully operational airbase. I mean, there was a load of fighter jets sitting on the runway ready to go if something were to happen.

And then we loaded on cattle trucks and we went and then we—they picked us up and went—which was kind of interesting on the way back. If you were on a certain flight, like, I don't know what the name of it was, but like Red Lion or something and you get on the—you go out. And our company trucks took us out just because there's only so many flew down and so many had to drive the trucks back. So, we—took us back to this so-called staging area. We all stood around to our—you know, waiting for the cattle truck to come. And our trucks took off, so we're just a group of guys. How many filled the airplane? I don't know, 200 guys maybe, but from all different units. So, the sergeants in the truck says, "When I call your name, get on the truck." So pretty soon, I'm the only guy left standing there. I said, "Hey, Sarge, you forgot my name," and he said, "What is it?" I told him, and he said, "No, not on the list." So, somebody with more rank bumped me, you know? So, he says, "Let's go," and they take off, and I'm standing in the middle of nowhere. I haven't had a—I didn't have a clue where I was.

All I had was my rifle and my duffel bag, and I, kind of, tell by the wheel tracks that they were headed that way when they went back. So, I grabbed my duffel bag and my rifle, and started walking back, and walked for about an hour. I didn't see a soul, and all of a sudden, I see a dust cloud coming. I said, "Well, there's—somebody's coming. Maybe I can flag them down." And then it was a jeep and just one guy in it, and I flagged him down, and he stopped. And he says, "Where are you going?" and I told him. He says, "Well, I know where that is. Jump in," so he took me back. So, when I got back, so Sharon, I figured, was waiting for me at home because, see, I should have been back that day.

So, a guy by the name of Frank Nettlesheim, he wanted to go back with the trucks. Well, I wanted to fly back, and he was flying out the next day. I said, "Well, is it okay with you, I'll trade places with you?" He says, "Oh." He didn't care. He'd love it. So, I went and asked my platoon sergeant. He says he don't care. I asked

the platoon leader, the lieutenant, and I asked him, and he says he didn't care. He said, "But clear it with the old man, the company commander," so I went and asked him. He said, "No way, you can't do it."

So, I asked Frank. I said, "Tell you what, we'll trade field jackets" because you got your name on the field jacket. "If you trade jackets, and I'll go with you," and I said, "I know, we're going to get in trouble somehow or another. We're going to pull this extra guard duty or something." I said, "But I'll pull your duty, and we'll swap, and go on." So, we did then he called Nettlesheim I got on the truck and when I was back the next day—then when the trucks came back, oh, the company commander was at the trucks. Well then I get called in, and I got reamed out pretty good and—but I thought he's going to bust me a rank, you know? But he didn't, and I did pull one extra night of guard duty, but he didn't do nothing to Frank, so. I say, his name was Connel [sp??], and he was an implement dealer in Waukesha. He sold farm equipment, and we bought farm equipment from him. So, I'm thinking that maybe he had a part to do with it because—anyhow, I did it. I thought, "Sure, I'd lose a stripe," but I didn't, you know? I was thankful for that.

Brooks: Do you know why he said no to letting you back on the plane?

Lindner: No. He never gave me a reason. Well, he don't have to give me a reason.

Brooks: Not that—

Lindner: Yeah.

Brooks: Don't. [Laughs] I just thought he might have.

Lindner: Yeah.

Brooks: Anything else interesting during that—your trip in the desert?

[00:34:56]

Lindner: Other than they stopped the war games at one time because guys were throwing stones at the airplanes. They'd come over simulating strafing us, and they were so low, you could easily hit them with a stone. But they called the war games off, and they had a directive come down and—well, we didn't. Nobody in our unit did it, but it was interesting to see them jets. You would not hear them until they actually went past you. But once they made a pass on you then they'd go straight up, and you could watch them circling around. And then they come right—they were like five, six feet off the deck and come by you. You stand up on top of a truck, and look down, and a plane coming by. That was really—and then, of course, you're breaking the sound barrier, so that was cool. But I do have—I took some pictures. I grabbed my camera. I should have been shooting at them, but, yeah, I was too interested—so anyway, that was neat but—I'm trying to say.

Well one time, the—blew our tent down. You know, we were out in the—it got quite cold in the desert at night, and we had gasoline heater. And one night, it was so windy, it blew the whole tent down. There were eight guys were sleeping. It was called a squadron tent. So, it was—that was pretty harrowing trying to set that thing up like in a sixty-mile hour wind, but we got it.

Brooks: What did you eat while you were out there?

Lindner: C-Rations mostly, but every once in a while, they would set up, what they called, K-Rations, I guess, or your regular kitchen. And it—well, I never went because you'd have to travel in a dusty, old truck for five miles to go—or maybe more to go eat the food that was—and then they always do what they called a tactical. You can't stand. You've got to stand like five yards away from an individual, and you've got to zigzag your way there, and it isn't worth it. I got—K-Rations were not that bad. So, a lot of guys couldn't stand them, but I didn't mind.

Brooks: Good enough?

Lindner: Yeah. [Both laugh] It was good enough for me.

Brooks: And so, you get—you got back. Do you remember when in your time there, you were in the desert, like what month-ish?

Lindner: Oh, it had to be, I'm guessing, like August, September, in that area.

Brooks: Okay.

Lindner: No. Maybe July. I know the Fourth of July we went up on Mount Rainier because we all said that we were going to spend—celebrate Mount—the Fourth of July in Mount Rainier and a good share of us did, so, when we first got out because you can see Mount Rainier from just about any place in the state. So that was kind of cool that. Then we spent the day up there.

Brooks: What did you do up there?

Lindner: Nothing. Just picnic, and goof off, and just said we were going to do it, so we did it.

Brooks: Any fireworks?

Lindner: No, we didn't have any. I don't know if—I don't remember. I think we lived in—my wife and I lived in Olympia, which was the capital of the state of Washington. And I think we went down to the lake, or riverfront, wherever the heck it was, and watched fireworks, but that was all. Yeah, because I think we walked down to it. That's the only fireworks we saw out there.

That—I don't know if you wanted it, but when my wife came out, it was, kind of, interesting for her to get a job out there. She worked as a beautician here, and she wanted to work there as a beautician. So, we lived in the state capital. I said, "Well, you need a Washington license" because she talked to some other places that would offer a job if she had a license. So, she went and talked to the clerk, or whatever the—I can't remember—Division of Cosmetology or whatever it was. And he said, "No, you have to go to school in Washington because you've got to have this and that." And then Sharon said, "Well, I did it in Wisconsin. And Wisconsin laws were more strict than Washington. You had to have more hours of this and that," whatever there. Plus she worked for two years as a beautician. They wouldn't accept that. It's got to be in their schools.

So, I said, "Well, you can't believe what the clerk tells you." I said, "You've got to talk to the headman." So, she sat two days in the office before that she could get in to see the headman or whoever ran that department. But finally, he did and she said—he said, "Well, you're an awful determined gal." And he said, "Tell you what, they're having a test in Seattle next week. You go and pass the test, I'll give you a license." So, she did. She went and test then she got the highest test the state had ever recorded at that time. So, that was kind of cool.

Brooks: And then she ended up getting a job?

Lindner: Mm-hm. She worked on—and that's where she got the idea because she worked for a gal out there that had her in her house, and she highly encouraged her to do that if she could do it. So then we lived a couple of miles from here, and she got—built a shop when we built the house. So, that was kind of cool.

[00:40:09]

Brooks: Hmm. So, did you live on base until Sharon got—

Lindner: Mm-hm.

Brooks: —into town? Okay. Which was in—around Thanksgiving you said?

Lindner: Right. Well, she came out Thanksgiving Day, and, yeah, it was quite an experience, too, trying to find housing, boy.

Brooks: So, you weren't provided housing in this—

Lindner: No, no. That was all taken up. So, I just got a newspaper, and fortunately, a guy by the name of Keith Fuchs [sp??] let me use his car. And then I was going to live with another fellow, Ronnie Zimmerman [sp??]. And he and I went out just house shopping for whatever we could find, an apartment or whatever, you know? And we ended up with this house. I can't remember the street but Mulver [sp??]....

Movanis [sp??]? They were an older couple, retired, and they had this house, and they rented it to us. And it was big enough for the two of us, so we had two, Ronnie and his wife and Sharon and I. So that was kind of cool.

Brooks: So the four of you lived together?

Lindner: Mm-hm. They had their own separate compartment or unit like, and we had ours, so it worked out.

Brooks: And how far were you from base then?

Lindner: Probably ten, fifteen-minute drive. The base was, kind of, between Olympia and, what, Tacoma. It was maybe twenty minutes, but it wasn't that far. It was just a decent drive, you know? It was nice because then we're off base, and my brother and some other friends would come, and they'd spend a weekend at our house. And out there, other than on base, you could not buy alcohol on the weekend. You had to—so, you had to buy enough on Friday, you know? [Laughs] Oh, but yeah.

Brooks: Anything else about living—

Lindner: Off—

Brooks: —out there in Fort Lewis and—?

Lindner: Off post?

Brooks: Yeah.

Lindner: No. Other than we had—just people treated you really well out there. I mean because we were, strangers and it was—before [inaudible] good for you as he could. Let's see.

We had a fun time getting the Christmas—or we were poor when we—because we didn't—I think I made \$500 a month and whatever she made, and we're paying rent there, plus we're paying for a house back in Wisconsin. There's my wife Sharon.

Sharon: Hello.

Lindner: Ellen.

Brooks: Hi.

Lindner: Telling her about—I was going to tell her about the time we went out, and we wanted a Christmas tree. So, we couldn't afford to buy one, so we drove around some state parks. I don't even know where it was. And we saw a nice tree on the

side of the road, and cut it down, and brought it home, and decorated it up, so we had a Christmas tree.

Sharon: Everybody was poor back then.

Lindner: Yeah, yeah. A lot of times, we—I have to park the car because I couldn't afford to buy gas, and I'd bum a ride from my buddies and all.

Brooks: So, you had to—yeah, you cut down a Christmas tree on the side of the road?

Lindner: Yeah. I don't know if it was legal or not, but we got away with it, so it was legal.

Brooks: Mm-hm.

Lindner: Another thing that was maybe worth mentioning is shortly after we arrived at Fort Lewis, we knew what the climate was and we knew what every—what we were going to be doing. So, this Ronnie Long [sp??], he was a carpenter contractor by trade. Where they got it, I don't know, but he got enough plywood and two-by-fours. They built all campers on the back of the three-quarter-tons so that we could mount our equipment more or less permanently, so when we moved. And then plus, we had a place to sleep. We could sleep in along with our equipment and so that was kind of cool.

He did the bigger trucks with the radio terminal. They had, well, like vans put on like—what did they call them? Something else. They had them, you know, but we—our smaller units for the radio truck and the switchboard truck didn't, so he did it for all the platoons. There were at least two for each platoon, maybe three, I'm trying to think, so that's times five, and we had five platoons. They built them all, so.

And every time we knew something was up. We thought we were going to be—because we were, of course, watching the news. We thought we were headed to Germany because Russia was building that wall. And every piece of equipment we had got brand-new tires. They didn't care if you put them on yesterday, you're putting new ones on today. So, there was a stack of tires out there. And being a signal battalion, we had every—we had one vehicle for every two men, so there was a lot of tires to change. So, we spent a lot of time doing that. Oh, that's when—that's when we thought something was up then we loaded every piece of equipment we had on to a train car, and then after nothing happened, we unloaded them all and then we went down to the Mojave Desert, so. We figured something was at wind then but nothing came out of it, which was good.

[00:45:12]

Brooks: Did you ever get any kind of official updates or briefs about—?

Lindner: There were stuff flying around all the time, but that's—they—a lot of it is put out by your own unit—your own—what do we call it? The superiors because they want rumors flying around, they—so you didn't believe nothing that they said. You know, we watched the TV on—you know, and what would come over the news, that's what we believed. And that's the company commander came down and said, "This is what's going to happen," well then we believed him. But otherwise, you didn't believe nothing, you know?

Brooks: Is now a good time to start talking about Leaky?

Lindner: Leaky? Oh, yeah, Leaky the lion, sure. Well shortly after out there, not—we weren't there very long and I—if I remember right, the guy's name was Jack Keating. He was one of the platoon sergeants. He thought it would be good to have a mascot, so we got up a fund and we all kicked in, I don't know, five bucks or whatever we could afford. And he—where he bought it from, I don't know, but all of a sudden, he shows up with this lion cub. So, he let him roam the barracks until he—that's where he got his name Leaky because you can imagine he always made a mess around the barracks. So then they got his own pen, and it was over by the supply shack. And then he was—he'd run around during the day. And like I said, they'd let him run in the mess halls when we were eating. And he was just like another dog or a cat. He'd come around begging for food just then. And he was very calm around the guys and everything.

And one thing happened. I was marching a work detail back to the company area for noon chow, and Leaky was loose. Well, he was pretty well grown that time. He probably weighed well over a hundred pounds, and he comes walking alongside me. He was loose. He wasn't supposed to be, but he was, and he walked right alongside of me. I just kind of—I reached down to pet him and kind of ignored of him. All of a sudden, he reached over and grabbed my leg. So, I didn't try to pull away. I just talked to him and petted him, and this one guy Dennis, Dennis Ettinger [sp??], he panicked, and he took off running. Well, that's just what the lion wanted. He wanted to play. And he made about three leaps, and he hit him—Dennis on the back, knocked him down, and he was no top of him licking the back of his neck. Oh, poor Dennis was about losing it then. Of course, we all ran over there, and this Jack Keating came over, too, and got him off. And he wasn't—he was just trying to play. He wanted to play. But after that, they got a bigger pen for him, and he wasn't out much.

Brooks: And he was declawed?

Lindner: Right and defanged.

Brooks: And defanged?

Lindner: Yeah. And that was a problem because when we come back, none of the zoos would take him. Like the Milwaukee Zoo and the Madison Zoo, at first, wouldn't

take him and then they tried to keep him. I don't remember who had him. I thought he was down in West Bend, but I'm not sure. But that wasn't all that long and then they couldn't handle him no more. And then the Madison Zoo built a special enclosure just for him.

Brooks: Was it because he couldn't be with the other lions?

Lindner: Right, right.

Brooks: Because he wasn't—? Okay.

Lindner: Yeah.

Brooks: Because he had no claws or fangs?

Lindner: Yeah.

Brooks: Well—so, Jack Keating was he like the—his handler?

Lindner: Mm-hm. Right.

Brooks: Okay, cool. And he was—Jack Keating and Leaky were attached to your particular unit?

Lindner: Right. Right. He was one of the five platoon sergeants. I don't remember which platoon he was. It wasn't ours but—

Brooks: Did you have any other good Leaky experiences?

Lindner: Other than when he was real little, we'd come in the barracks, and he would jump from the top bunk. Well, they set up the top bunker—the first or second guy who enter, he'd jump on your back, you know? [Laughs] He was quite small then, so it wasn't so bad, but when he got bigger—other than that, we went and visited him when he's at the zoo. I took our kids to show him and then I didn't see him again until he was stuffed and he was on exhibit in the State Capitol. And I think I went up there to testify about something and saw that he was there, and I was, kind of, surprised. I didn't—well why would he keep them there, but anyway. When I went back, my grandson likes—he lives in Madison. We went up to the Capitol just for the heck of it, and I asked one of the guards, "Where's Leaky?" And he looked kind of, "Leaky? What—?" [Laughs] And then I told him the story and then he said, "Gosh, I never heard that before." And I guess he got in touch with you and then—

[00:50:03]

Brooks: Yeah.

Lindner: So that was, kind of, cool.

Brooks: Wow. Do you remember when it was that you'd seen him in the Capitol when he was stuffed?

Lindner: Had to—boy, I can't. It had to be in the '80s, early '80s but that, I'm not positive about that.

Brooks: Okay. I think I'm going to have to do some digging because I want to know what happened.

Lindner: Yeah, I'd be curious too.

Brooks: Do you know—what did Leaky eat and who fed him?

Lindner: Well, at the—Jack Keating, I don't know. He was in with the mess sergeant. Everybody was in on it, so I'm sure they ordered him special food at—I think they fed him steaks. I don't—or raw meat is I think. I really don't know, but, yeah, he was well taken care of.

Brooks: And how did he get—how did he get back? Did he just travel with you?

Lindner: I don't think so. They probably had a cage, and Jack probably brought him back. I don't know that though. I really don't know what happened to him because I was just—quickly had to get back myself.

Brooks: Yeah. [Both laugh] You had other things to worry about?

Lindner: Yeah.

Brooks: Cool. So he became like a mascot for your unit, would you say?

Lindner: Right. For the 132nd Signal Battalion, and then I guess, in order for the zoo to take him that, they—[inaudible] in the 32nd Infantry Division mascot which was fine but—

Brooks: [inaudible]. That's neat.

Lindner: Yeah, it's great, interesting story.

Brooks: Not a lot of lion mascots—

Lindner: Not many, no.

Brooks: —or at least not real ones. [Laughs] Cool.

Lindner: Another thing was that the 32nd Infantry Division became the combat rated, the fastest of any group that they ever did, so that was kind of cool. We were ready to go in a very short time, so we had some good officers and good training.

Brooks: Yeah. Anything else about your time while you're at Fort Lewis?

Lindner: Let's see. I can't think of anything. Oh, we went spend time in Yakima Valley. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but that was—there was a lot of—there's petrified wood all over the place. And they said not to pick it up, but I picked up a small can of it up and brought it home, and Sharon threw it away, so, [laughs] yeah, anyway.

Brooks: Did you bring anything else back with you, or did you take any other like souvenirs or anything?

Lindner: No. No. Just a lot of memories, that's about it.

Brooks: Mm-hm. And what was it like being there with your brother?

Lindner: Well, it was cool, but there were a couple of other brothers in our unit too. They always said they would—if they really came to combat, they would separate the brothers, but I don't think they would have. I don't know. But he was—I was in the switchboard section. He was in the radio terminal.

Oh, what interesting experience. They—you know, they came and tried to gas us. At that time, they used what they called CS gas. It was a tear gas and a vomiting gas. And they tried to lay it down on us, and this one day, this helicopter came. It was quite windy, and he could not get the gas to go where he wanted to. And my brother and the other guys in this truck, they were trying to hit his truck. They're out there they're giving the pilot the finger, and he was close. I mean you could see him and everything, and so pretty soon, he just took off. But the next morning, he came back and it was dead calm. And he sat on top of that truck pumping gas into it.

That was—I don't know if you've ever been gassed, but you could—he—my brother had to wear a gas mask for, I'd say, at least a week to drive the truck, and he drove the truck, and even to go in the truck, you know? It was—it was wicked. That's—they used it. I don't know if you remember when they had the riots in Milwaukee? They used it in there, and they should use this today when they riot. That ended it in a hurry. I mean, you lost your cookies. I mean like right now, you didn't—and then plus, the tear gas. So, you try to take your mask off to try to vomit and then, oh, it was some bad stuff.

Brooks: Yeah.

Sharon: [inaudible]

Lindner: Somebody is yeah. So, can I offer you a cup of coffee or anything?

Brooks: I'm okay. I'm good. Yeah, I had some on my way up.

Lindner: Oh, okay.

Brooks: Mm-hm. Yeah. So, when did you come back? When did you get—I don't know—

Lindner: I—when we got out, it was almost exactly a year if I remember right. It was right around October twentieth. And well, we drew lots to see who would come back because some guys went back early, like two or three weeks early to get the armory ready and all that stuff. And I was drawing a lot to come back early, but I knew my brother he was—they were planning to get married as quick as they could when he came back, so I gave him my ticket to come back so he came back early. I stayed out an extra three weeks or whatever it was.

[00:55:22]

Brooks: Mm-hm. So, you didn't all go back together?

Lindner: No. A lot of us had this—had to stay back and load the equipment. And that was a bit job, loading all the equipment, blocking it all under, chaining it down and— but—then they had to do it the other, and they had to unload it, so. They had fun doing that. But that's just part of the job.

Brooks: Mm-hm. [background dialogue; not transcribed] And was the ride back as fun as the ride too from the bus?

Lindner: I had my own car out there then. See, when Sharon came out, my folks brought her out with my car and then they took the train back. So, we had our car out there, so we drove back in our personal vehicle. So that was nice.

Brooks: Did you make any stops along the way?

Lindner: Not, no sightseeing. We just wanted to get back. We—of course, we didn't have any money. We were lucky, we could get back where we got back. Although, they—they did—the government paid us for our trip back. They paid you so much of miles, so we did have money for gas for that. But we were just anxious to get back, get to our house.

We had a brand new house. We bought it in June, I think it was, and we moved in in June rather. And I was gone in October, so it wasn't long to get things going. We had lots of stuff to do in the house, so. And there, again, we had a very good neighbor. He's gone now, too, but he kept the driveway plowed out and kept the

house looking like there was somebody living in there. So, that was nice. He took care of the house. He looked after it. Nothing was broken into or, you know, watered in over a floor or what have you, you know? So that was nice.

Brooks: And then did you—you opted to get discharged pretty much right away after you were back in Wisconsin?

Lindner: Yeah. We were back like two or three weeks. Got the equipment all put away, and everything sorted out, and cleaned up. And then the company commander made an announcement that most [inaudible] were eligible to—you fulfilled your military obligation, so you're eligible to get out. He said, "I want to interview you, each one of you," so we got in line and went to his office, and he asked, "Why you want to get out?" And I just told him, "I fulfilled my military obligation and want to part ways," and that was it.

Brooks: Mm-hm. And what about your brother?

Lindner: He—the same thing. He was eligible too, so.

Brooks: And he also opted to get out?

Lindner: Get out, yeah. Like I say, just about everybody went. There was only may be—lucky if there were thirty guys left in the company when I left then. Man, if I had stayed in, I was a sergeant then, I really could have moved up through the ranks pretty quick, so. And I might have went back to military. I have a name if you wanted to talk to anybody else.

Brooks: Sure. Definitely.

Lindner: He stayed in, and he went on to become a colonel, and he spent thirty years in there, guard.

Brooks: And he was—do you know what—

Lindner: You can have the papers there.

Brooks: Yeah, great.

Lindner: So—

Brooks: Do you still stay in touch with him?

Lindner: Oh yeah. He belongs to our church, and we're starting a satellite church out in the Town of Erin, and he was out there. We have to help set up the chairs and all of that kind of stuff for it. And he goes out there every Sunday afternoon. We do that. So, I see him every Sunday. Although—no. I should see him, but I didn't see

him last Sunday, he went up turkey huntin' so I didn't see him. But I had talked to him about what—if he'd be interested in doing. He said, yes, he would so.

Brooks: Oh, great. Thank you.

Lindner: So yeah.

Brooks: Did you stay in touch with a lot of people?

Lindner: You know—

Brooks: —from the service?

Lindner: —for a while, but not—now, I don't see hardly anybody. Wayne would be the only one. Of course, my brother died. I don't really keep in touch with any of them. You kind of go your separate ways, and you get involved in different things and move on to different parts of the country, and so.

Brooks: Did you join any veterans groups, any organizations?

Lindner: Uh-uh.

Brooks: No?

Lindner: I never. They were after me. I had friends that were in the veterans groups, and they said I should join, and I don't know. I just didn't want to anymore, so I never did.

Brooks: Yeah. Do you think anything about your life changed significantly because you were in the service?

Lindner: Oh, I think everything changed because you still—even to this day, you—for the things you did in the service, I think that that just gets ingrained to you. You just do that way—do it that way. Like, well for instance, well my son when he was in college and my grandson, their rooms were always a mess, and that would have never stood in the Army, you know? So that part just gets ingrained to you. You just—everything has got to be neat, and clean, and orderly, so. That—I miss that or I mean I liked that part of it, I guess I should say.

[01:00:11]

Brooks: Mm-hm. And how many kids do you have?

Lindner: Two.

Brooks: Two? And then grandkids?

Lindner: Two—or four. They—

Brooks: What stage—

Lindner: I say two because my daughter got married younger, my son got married later, so I got two sets of. I get—Lizzie is ten and his or her brother is fourteen and then my other set is Andrew is twenty-three and his sister is twenty-one, so.

Brooks: Yeah. [Laughs]

Lindner: Two, which is nice.

Brooks: Very different. Yeah, parts of life. All right, cool. And did any of your—either of your kids go into service?

Lindner: Uh-uh.

Brooks: No?

Lindner: No. I—I didn't discourage them, but I'd figured, well, if they don't have the desire, I'm not going to force them but—

Brooks: Anything that you would—any advice that you might give people who are thinking about going into the service?

Lindner: Hmm, do it I guess. But join the Navy or the Air Force because you've always got a clean bunk to sleep in, [laughs] but I don't regret. There are some times you—that were a little tougher than others, but, ah, you get over it, you know? And it—the food and everything, a lot of people complain about it, but I—we were down in New Orleans down there when that flood—I went down with a church group, and we rebuilt the houses. So, I had a chance to eat some of the—what do you call that—MRIs, Meals, Ready-to-Eat, yeah.

Brooks: MREs, yeah.

Lindner: E's. And I thought they were pretty good. I did. And there were a lot of guys who were complaining about that, but I don't know. I thought it was good.

Brooks: You went down after Katrina?

Lindner: Mm-hm.

Brooks: Oh, nice.

Lindner: I went down. I went down by myself—well with other group from church and then the next year, Sharon went down with another group from church, so. Yeah. That was interesting. I think that was a worthwhile trip, so—used to in our group, and, I guess, my health isn't good enough that I couldn't do it. I'd just be in the way and I—so I—I really love to do it though. Right.

Brooks: That's great.

Lindner: That's about it. [Laughs]

Brooks: All right. Yeah, anything else on your sheet—

Lindner: No, I don't—

Brooks: —that you—that we missed or—?

Lindner: Other than when before my wife got out there, my brother, and his friend Bob, and myself went to Seattle for a weekend. We had a weekend pass. I went there just to see what it's all about, and seeing the US or went to the USO there, and that was nice then. Because you know, I've never been to Seattle, and we went to see that, but they—it was interesting. Those two guys are single. I was married. So, we all get in a bus, and I wanted to sit in seats together where we could talk. They said, "No, no. We want to seat, and maybe we'll get a young gal to come sit with us, you know?" [laughs] "Okay." So, it didn't happen. But it—well, I called her elderly, she was probably maybe fifty, sat with me, and we got—struck up a conversation. And, of course, they knew we were in the service being where we got on the bus and so on. And they—so she invited me to Thanksgiving dinner, so I got—I could and then after she realized I went with Bob and Bill, she said, "They could come too if they wanted to." But—well, my wife was coming out, so I had to turn her down, but that was cool, and I thought it was nice of her. I would have went there had there not—just my wife coming that day. That was—I could say that people treated us real well out there.

Brooks: And then did you have Thanksgiving with your wife, and your brother, and—?

Lindner: No. Well actually, she didn't get out until late in the afternoon, so we had it on post had a Thanksgiving meal and then, I don't know what we had when she got out there. We had the house—I had the house rented, but I'm sure I had food in the house. But what it was, I don't remember. And we—maybe we went—my folks were out there then, too, so maybe we went and bought something. You know I don't remember. And then we made a trip up to the rainforest. My folks wanted to see that. And we went up to Vancouver, and the company commander was nice enough to let me have time off, so that was nice.

Brooks: Awesome. Just so we have it, do you happen to know how to spell the last name of Frank whose jacket you switched?

Lindner: Oh—

Brooks: It starts with an N.

Lindner: N? Wait, I got—his brother or cousin—I should say not his brother—lives across the street—

Brooks: Oh, wow, small world.

Lindner: And I think it's N-E—? No, I don't recall.

Brooks: If you don't know, we can probably look it up but just—

Lindner: Yeah. It should be in my contacts. Oh, come on. [background dialogue; not transcribed]

Brooks: Well, I'll let you look. Are you okay if we turn the recorder off? Do you think—

Lindner: Sure.

Brooks: —we're done?

Lindner: Yeah.

Brooks: Okay, great.

Lindner: That would be fine.

Brooks: All right, I'll turn that off.

Lindner: Oh, I don't—my—

[01:05:04]

[End of OH2128.Lindner] [End of interview]